



Human Services Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2023

7:00 pm

Acton Town Hall, Room 204
472 Main Street Acton, MA 01720

Present: Leo Fochtman (Chair), Madeline Cruz (Vice-Chair) (remote via Zoom), Paula Walsh (Clerk) (remote via Zoom), Boris Klebanov, Danny Factor, Franny Osman, Jeff Bergart, (remote via Zoom), Laura Ducharme, and Fran Arsenault (Select Board Liaison), Mark Conoby (remote via Zoom)

Absent: Hema Santhanakrishnan

Invited Guests: Austin Cyganiewicz, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs; Brittany Nash, Regional Community Health and Wellness Coordinator

1. Opening

Chair, Leo Fochtman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

2. Regular Business

- i. Approval of Meeting Minutes – There was a motion by Franny Osman and seconded by Madeline Cruz to approve the February 2023 HSC minutes with edits. There was approval by 7-0, with Paula Walsh abstaining.
- ii. Member Updates:
 - a. Madeline Cruz: Recommended the online Facebook page, Acton Forum, as a potential source of information dissemination, pointing out a recent successful lost and found incident where a child's lost backpack was found and returned to the parent by using the online source.
 - b. Action Unlimited: Has been allowing charitable organizations to publish information for free. This may be another avenue that the HSC could publish contact information for a variety of services.
 - c. New Community Assistance Program details were outlined by Ms. Ducharme. The program will be funded with ARTA (American Rescue Plan Act) Federal resources. The funds can be used for urgent needs such as rent, utilities, or childcare for example. There will be rolling application periods and differs from how United Way funds are dispersed. For example the income guidelines are lower at 300% of Federal poverty level. The funds available are larger than the United Way and Friend in Need resources.



- d. Home Sharing Program: Mr. Bergart gave advance notice that there is a Council on Aging program scheduled for April 19, 2023 from 2-3 pm on Home Sharing.
- iii. Future Speakers: Discussions continue around which additional speakers the committee would like to hear from. Mr. Fochtman will send the committee an email with a list of potential speakers and committee members should return their top five interests to him.

3. **New/Special Business:**

- i. Invited Guest Presentations:

- a. Austin Cyganiewicz presented the committee with the various transportation options currently available in Acton, and how to access them:

- i. Centralized Dispatch through CrossTown Connect at 978-844-6809, available Monday through Friday, except holidays from 8:30 am to 4 pm.

- ii. Online Ride Requests can also be made at www.crosstownconnect.org; the staff will contact you with verification during the next business day.

- iii. Minute Van is a shared Dial-A-Ride service intended to safely and efficiently transport multiple passengers at a time including students aged 12-18 with prior parental authorizations in place, packet on-line at www.minutevan.net. The van can be used for many purposes including work, medical appointments, shopping, social and recreational reasons. All services are provided with wheelchair accessible vehicles. Trips must be booked at least 1 business day in advance. Vehicles operate Monday through Friday 8 am to 11 am and 12:15 pm to 6:15 pm, except holidays. Service covers anywhere in Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, Maynard and medical facilities in Concord on a space-available basis.

- iv. CAT (Cross-Acton Transit) a regular route with van services to thirteen stops throughout Acton. The route, schedule, tracking and where your nearest stop can be found online at www.CrossActonTransit.com

- v. Council on Aging Van: Seniors can arrange rides using the COA van by contacting the dispatcher services noted above.

- b. Brittany Nash : Introduced herself and explained that as the Regional Community Health Coordinator, she serves as a mental health advocate for the towns of Acton, Lowell, Westford, and Dracut Health Departments.



- ii. Dissemination of information: The committee discussed the options of written and/or online access as well as the creation of a QR Code for any written materials. Information sources to be worked on by the committee:
 - a. The current services resource book will be edited by Ms. Ducharme who originally created it.
 - b. Mr. Fochtman offered to create QR Codes for easier access to online information sites which can be included with any written flyers, posters or other literature.
 - c. Access to Acton committee meeting recordings, including those of HSC, has been deemed difficult by comments made by residents to several members of the committee. Possible ways to make it clearer how the recordings are currently available and possible ways to improve the ease of access were discussed. The topic will be added to a future agenda.
- iii. Town Meeting is scheduled for May 1 & 2, 2023. The committee will review the warrants prior to the next meeting for possible discussion of any that may be of direct interest to the HSC.
- iv. Second monthly meeting of the HSC was discussed. A motion to have meetings on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month through June 2023 was made by Ms. Cruz and seconded by Mr. Bergart. Roll call was done and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Adjournment

At 9:30 p.m., it was moved by Franny Osman and seconded by Madeline Cruz to adjourn the meeting. Roll call was done. The motion was unanimously approved.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting are available through DocuShare*

- A. [March 9 Meeting \(acton-ma.gov\)](https://acton-ma.gov)